

CHARITON COURIER.

A.C. VANDIVER & SON, Proprietors

KEYTESVILLE, - MISSOURI.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

Visited for the First Time in Sixteen Years.

"Hello, Jim! Where have you been lately?" shouted a broker the other evening to a portly, finely dressed man in the corridor of the St. James. The gentleman stopped, shook hands with his friend and replied: "I've been home to see my old father and mother, the first time in sixteen years, and I'll tell you, old man, I wouldn't have missed the visit for all my fortune."

"Kinder good to visit your old boyhood home, eh?"

"You bet. Sit down. I was just thinking about the old folks and feel talkative. If you have a few moments to spare, sit down, light a cigar, and listen to a story of a rich man who had almost forgotten his father and mother."

They sat down and the man told his story.

"How I came to visit my old home happened in a curious way. Six weeks ago I went down to Fire Island fishing. I had a lunch 'put up at Crook & Nash's, and you can imagine my astonishment when I opened the hamper to find a package of crackers wrapped up in a piece of newspaper. That newspaper was the little country weekly published at my home in Wisconsin. I read every word in it, advertisements and all. There was George Kellogg, who was a school-mate of mine, advertising hams and salt pork and another boy was postmaster. By George! It made me homesick, and I determined then and there to go home, and go home I did. In the first place I must tell you how I came to New York. I had a tiff with my father and left home. I finally turned up in New York with a dollar in my pocket. I got a job running a freight elevator in the very house in which I am now a partner. My haste to get rich drove the thoughts of my parents from me, and when I did think of them the hard words that my father last spoke to me rankled in my bosom. Well, I went home. I didn't see much change in Chicago, but the magnificent new depot in Milwaukee I thought was an improvement on the old shed they used to have. It was only thirty miles from Milwaukee to my home, and I told you, John, that train seemed to creep. I was actually worse than a school-boy going home for a vacation. At last we neared town. Familiar sights met my eyes, and, darn it all, they filled with tears. There was Bill Lyman's red barn, just the same, but, great Scott! that were all the other houses? We rode nearly a mile before coming to the depot, though houses were many, occasionally I saw one that was familiar. The train stopped and I jumped off. Not a face in sight that I knew, and I started down the platform to go home. In the office stood the station agent. I walked up and said: 'Howdy, Mr. Collins?'

He stared at me and replied: 'You've got the best of me, sir.'

I told him who I was and what I had been doing in New York, and he didn't make any bones talking to me. Said he: 'It's about time you came home. You in New York rich, and your father scratching gravel to get a bare living?'

I told you, John, it knocked me all in a heap. I thought my father had enough to live on comfortably. Then a notion struck me. Before going home I telegraphed to Chicago to one of our correspondents to send me \$1,000 by first mail. Then I went into Mr. Collins' back office, got my trunk in there, and put on an old hand-me-down suit that I used for fishing and hunting. My plug I replaced by a soft hat, took my valise in my hand, and went home. Somehow the place didn't look right. The current bushes had been dug up from the front yard and the fence was gone. All the old locust trees had been cut down and young maples were planted. The house looked smaller, somehow, too. But I went up to the front door and rang the bell. Mother came to the front door and said:

"We don't wish to buy anything to-day, sir."

"It didn't take a minute to survey her from head to foot. Neatly dressed, John, but a patch and a darn here and there, hair streaked with gray, her face thin, drawn and wrinkled. Yet over her eyes shone those good, honest, benevolent eyes. I stood staring at her and then she began staring at me. I saw the blood rush to her face, and then with a great sob she threw herself upon me and nervously clasped me around the neck, hysterically crying: 'It's Jimmy! It's Jimmy!'

"Then I cried, too, John. I just broke down and cried like a baby. She got me into the house, hugging and kissing me, and then she went to the back door and shouted, 'George!'

"Father came in a moment and from the kitchen asked, 'What do you want, Carline?'

"Then he came in. He knew me in a moment. He stuck out his hand and grasped mine, and said sternly, 'Well, young man, do you propose to behave yourself now?'

He tried hard to put on a brave front, but he broke down. There we three sat like whipped school children, all whimpering. At last supper time came and mother went out

to prepare it. I went into the kitchen with her.

"Where do you live, Jimmy?" she asked.

"In New York," I replied.

"What are you working at now, Jimmie?"

"I am working in a dry goods store."

"Then I suppose you don't live very big, for I hear tell of them city clerks who don't get enough money to keep body and soul together. No I'll just tell you, Jimmy, we got nothin' but roast spareribs for supper. We ain't got any money Jimmy. We're poorer nor Job's turkey."

"I told her that I would be delighted with the spareribs, and to tell the truth, John, I haven't eaten a meal in New York that tasted as well as those crisp roasted spareribs did. I spent the evening playing checkers with father, while mother stayed by telling me all about their misfortunes, from old Mooney getting drowned in the pond to father's signing a note for a friend and having to mortgage the place to pay it. The mortgage was due within a week and not a cent to meet it with—just eight hundred dollars. She supposed they would be turned out of house and home, but in my mind I supposed they wouldn't. At last 9 o'clock came, and father said: 'Jim, go out to the barn and see if Kit is all right. Bring in an armful of old shingles that are just outside the door, and fill up the water pail. Then we'll go off to bed and get up early and go a-fishing.'"

"I didn't say a word, but went out to the barn, bedded down the horse, broke up an armful of shingles, pumped a pail of water, filled the wood box, and then all went to bed. Father called me at 4:30 in the morning, and while he was getting some breakfast I skipped over to the depot and got my best brass rod. Father took nothing but a trolling line and spoon hook. He rowed the boat with his trolling line in his mouth, while I stood in the stern with a silver shiner rigged on. Now, John I never saw a man catch fish like he did. To make a long story short, he caught four bass and five pickers, and I never got a bite."

At noon we went ashore and father went home while I went to the post-office. I got a letter from Chicago with a check for \$1,000 in it. With some trouble I got it cashed, getting paid in five and ten dollar bills, making quite a roll. I then got a roast joint of beef and a lot of delicacies and had them sent home. The joint was in the oven. Mother had put on her only silk dress, and father had donned his Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, none too good either. This is where I played a joke on the old folks. Mother was in the kitchen watching the roast. Father was out at the barn, and I had a clear coast. I dumped the sugar out of the old blue bowl, put the \$1,000 in it, and placed the cover on again. At last supper was ready. Father asked a blessing over it, and he actually trembled when he stuck his knife in the roast.

"We haven't had a piece of meat like this in five years, Jim," he said, and mother put in with, "and we haven't had any coffee in a year, only when we went a visitin'."

"Then she pured out the coffee and lifted the cover of the sugar-bowl, asking as she did so: 'How many spoons, Jimmy?'

"Then she struck something that wasn't sugar. She picked up the bowl and peered into it. 'Aha! Master Jimmy, playing your old tricks on your mammy, eh? Well, boys, will be boys.'"

Then she gasped for breath. She saw it was money. She looked at me, then at father, and then with trembling hands she drew the great roll of bills out.

"Ha! ha! ha! I can see father now as he stood there on tiptoe, with his knife in one hand and fork in the other, and his eyes fairly bulging out of his head. But it was too much for mother. She raised her eyes to Heaven and said slowly: 'Put your trust in the Lord, for he will provide.'"

"Then she fainted away. Well, John there's not much more to tell. We threw water in her face and soon brought her to, and then we demolished that dinner, mother all the time saying: 'My boy Jimmy! My boy Jimmy!'

"I staid at home a month. I fixed up the place, paid off the debts, had a good time, and came back again to New York. I am going to send fifty dollars home every week. I tell you John, it's mighty nice to have a home."

John was looking steadily at the head of his cane. When he spoke he took Jim by the hand and said: "Jim, old friend, what you told me has affected me greatly. I haven't heard from my old home way up in Maine for ten years. I'm going home to-morrow."

Business during the year 1887 was much better than it had been for several years. There is now more money in circulation, a great deal more, than six months ago. There are also larger deposits in banks than has been for some time, and the bank has more money to loan, which goes to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that times are improving.

The decay of stone may be arrested, either in buildings or monuments, by heating and treating with paraffine mixed with a little creosote. A common "paint burner" may be used to heat the stone.

What Salt is Good For.

For relief from heartburn or dyspepsia, drink a little cold water in which has been dissolved a teaspoonful of salt.

Inc stains on linen can be taken out if the stain is first washed in strong salt and water and then sponged with lemon juice.

For stains on the hand nothing is better than a little salt with enough lemon juice to moisten it, rubbed on the spots and then washed off in clear water.

In a basin of water, salt of course, falls to the bottom; so never soak salt fish with the skin side down, as the salt will fall to the skin and remain there.

The very simple remedy of common salt has cured many cases of fever and ague. A teaspoonful taken in water and a teaspoonful deposited in each stocking next to the foot as the chill is coming on. This comprises the whole of the treatment.

For weeds in pavement or gravel walks make a strong brine of coarse salt and boiling water, put the brine in a sprinkling can and water the weeds thoroughly, being careful not to let any of the brine get on the grass, or it will kill it, too.

If a chimney or flue catch fire, close all windows and doors first, then hang a blanket in front of the grate to exclude all air. Water should never be poured down the chimney as it spoils the carpets. Coarse salt thrown down the flue is much better.

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